The focus of these four chapters in *Fair Isn’t Always Equal* is on the aspect of grading students. This topic encompasses a lot of layers, from the general consensus that the current grading system is extremely flawed and ultimately obsolete, to the debate of including aspects like attendance, effort, and preparedness into a student’s final grade. In all it is a very convoluted subject, and often gets balanced between a teacher’s personal preference and the required standards of the school district. I dread the day that I have to give out my first “F” or the first time I have to sit down with a parent and explain why their child is failing my class. In my mind this is not just a reflection of the student’s knowledge, because sometimes it isn’t, but it also shows that somewhere down the line of teaching I have failed to convey something to this student and I want to find a way to rectify that. I am a big fan of the practice of having students come and see me and have a one-on-one conference with me if they score below the standard on the grading system. I want to talk with them and find out what was happening with them on the day, or what part of the work they didn’t understand, and hopefully find a way to let them redo their mistakes and show their true proficiency. Of course, I would make this available to students who feel they want to improve a grade that has met the standard. If a student knows why they got a B instead of an A and they want that A, I will be more than happy to give them that chance.

From Kindergarten to 8th grade I had always been given a separate grade in each subject that showed my effort in that particular class. Sometimes this would prove to be a saving grace with my parents, as they always felt that if I tried it meant more than whatever grade I got. At the same time, it could also land me in even more hot water if I got a poor grade and showed no effort. However, I feel that this practice, when used correctly, could prove to be helpful with helping students, their parents, and even myself determine what needs to be changed or improved for that student. A high grade, but low effort might show that a student feels they are not being challenged enough, just as a low grade, but high effort can show that maybe a student needs an altered testing method. A grade alone really is just a label, but having a secondary effort grade or even just comments from the teacher alongside that grade can make a huge difference. That is where a student and their parents can start to understand what the teacher, is noticing, and connections and understandings can be made. At the same time, I don’t feel attendance and whether or not a student remembered a pencil should be counted into the final grade. All it shows is how nitpicky a teacher can be, and opens the door for students who want to earn the bare minimum points without trying very hard.